

M MINUTES

meeting: **AUDIT (EXAMINATION OF PAID
ACCOUNTS/MONITORING OF AUDIT
INVESTIGATIONS) SUB-COMMITTEE**

date: **5 MARCH 2012**

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Keirle (Chair);
Councillors Inston, Dr Hardacre (part) and Mrs Thompson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:-

Delivery

J Alexander	-	Principal Auditor
P Farrow	-	Head of Audit
S Lunn	-	Head of Operational Finance
R Morgan	-	Senior Audit Manager
A Saini	-	Internal Audit
M Wilkes	-	Principal Auditor
M Fox	-	Democratic Support Officer

Community

J Welsby (part)	-	Assistant Director (Children and Family Support)
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Wolverhampton
City Council



PART I – OPEN ITEMS
(Open to Press and Public)

Declarations of Interest

- 60 Councillor Keirle declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 (Accounts Selected for Examination on 12 December 2011) as a Member of Wolverhampton Homes Board.

Minutes

- 61 Resolved:-
That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2011 be approved as a correct record.

Accounts for Examination Selected on 26 September 2011
(Resolution 58 (iii)/(v))

Members noted that briefing notes had recently been circulated in connection with a number of issues, including those detailed below:-

Outdoor Events (Resolution 58(iii))

Councillor Inston called for a more detailed breakdown of the budgets shown in the briefing note, particularly in relation to the City Show, the Steam Rally, Wolvestock and the Sikh Event. He mentioned particularly the costs of security and hire of equipment for these events and asked for details of the providers in each case.

- 62 Resolved:-
That a detailed breakdown of the expenses relating to the City Show, the Steam Rally, Wolvestock and the Sikh Event, including details of the providers of security and equipment hire in each case be provided for Sub-Committee Members.

Dog Bins on Parks and Green Spaces (Resolution 58(v))

Councillor Keirle questioned the adequacy of the budget of £40,000 for the cleansing and emptying of dog bins on parks and open spaces for 2011/12 for a City of the size of Wolverhampton and suggested that the issue be referred for consideration by the appropriate Scrutiny Panel.

- 63 Resolved:-
That it be recommended that the adequacy of the budget for the emptying and cleansing of dog bins on parks and open spaces for 2011/12 be referred to the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel for consideration.

Schedule of Outstanding Minutes (Appendix 1/23)

The Democratic Support Officer submitted the schedule of outstanding minutes.

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Resolved:-

That the report be received and noted.

Use of Agency Workers in the Community Directorate (Appendix 1/24)

A report was submitted which detailed expenditure on agency staff in the Community Directorate. The Assistant Director (Children and Family Support) indicated that agency staff are used only in response to periods of exceptional pressure and/or unfilled vacancies.

In discussion, Councillor Hardacre expressed concerned that, in terms of Adult Social Care, 10 members of staff are currently engaged in systems thinking and had been taken away from their normal duties. He also noted that the Business Change Manager was being used to support the changes in Adult Social Care. The officer responded that the systems thinking methods required staff to be available to map the current processes in the Care Management and Assessment Service. although seconded staff will return to their substantive posts in September 2012. Member suggested that the issues raised at the meeting should be referred to the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Panel.

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Resolved:-

That the report be noted and that it be recommended that the issues raised in paragraph 4.1 of the report relating to staff of the Community Directorate being seconded to other areas of development work be referred to the Adults and Community Scrutiny Panel.

Exclusion of Press and Public

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Resolved:-

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from consideration of the items of business in Part II of the agenda on the grounds that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, exempt information falling within paragraph 1, 2 & 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, was likely to be disclosed.

PART II – EXEMPT ITEMS
(Press and Public Excluded)

Accounts for Examination Selected on 12 December 2011
(Appendix 1/25)

The Head of Audit presented a report which provided details of the selection of paid accounts which had been selected for examination on 12 December 2011 and where appropriate, provided details of action to be taken to address any area of weakness in control or compliance with the Council's Financial and Contract Procedure rules which might have been identified during the course of the review.

The Head of Audit also referred to the future role of the Sub-Committee which would be considered by the main Audit Committee on 12 March 2012. It was proposed that the current paid accounts work would be absorbed into the wider transparency agenda and that expenditure data extracts would be submitted to allow Members to select a much reduced sample for review. The Sub-Committee would continue to monitor the progress of investigations undertaken by Audit Services, including fraud. Members were advised of proposals to widen the fraud agenda by setting up a counter fraud unit within Internal Audit and a document entitled "Widening the Fraud Agenda" was circulated for information. The Chair suggested that the changes in the terms of reference of the Committee and Sub-Committee be reported directly to full Council rather than through the Special Advisory Group and Standards Committee and officers undertook to clarify the situation.

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Resolved:-

(i) That the summary of investigations and action taken be noted.

(ii) That in connection with Account No 12:-

(a) the Audit Committee be requested to give consideration to the future of pooled budgets with the PCT, and any risks arising from those budgets, in view of the demise of the PCT, and

(b) a briefing note be circulated to Sub-Committee Members to provide an assurance that arrangements have been made for the Quality Assurance Team to make periodic visits to the service detailed in the Account.

(iii) That in connection with Account No 14, a briefing note be circulated to Sub-Committee Members detailing the number of adaptations and works which are being undertaken by Wolverhampton Homes on behalf of other organisations.

Audit Update (Appendix 1/26)

The Head of Audit presented a report which provided the Sub-Committee with an update on current Audit Investigations.

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Resolved:-

That the report be received and noted.